



OFFICERS JON SAMSON, left, and John Escobedo of the Baldwin Park Area office stand by as a Northview High School student tries out the Fatal Vision goggles.

(San Gabriel Valley Tribune photo by John Fontes)

“They’re hysterical, laughing at each other,” Escobedo said. After the demonstration, he tells them, “People are laughing at you. Would you want to be so out of control that people are laughing at you?”


He concludes with the admonition that drinking behavior may appear humorous, but it could be very costly.

Officers have used the goggles in some innovative ways to carry their “don’t drink and drive” message. Officer Rich Stewart of the San Jose Area took a pair to the Tech Museum of Innovation during the holidays to demonstrate impaired driving to museum-goers.

In Bakersfield, Officer Mack Wimbish let the media wear the goggles while he gave them a field sobriety test.

The main focus, however, is high school students. “If you give high school students a lecture, they don’t pay attention. What I hope is, six months or six years from now, they will think about what they’ve learned and give the car keys to someone else,” said Officer Wayne Ziese of the Santa Rosa Area office.

Explorers Try Out Law Enforcement Careers



Participation in the CHP's Explorer Scout program sailed to new highs during 1998. Explorer posts more than doubled, involving an estimated 500 young men and women 15 to 21 years of age.

The expansion resulted from the Department's increased emphasis on the program, which gives youths an inside view of law enforcement.

Young people receive extensive training through a four-level program which gives them skills to direct traffic, take reports, provide help at crash scenes, assist in dispatch, and set up and take down DUI checkpoints, among many other duties.

Ride-alongs give them first-hand experience in the operation of the Department.

The importance of the Explorer program was underscored in 1998 when the Department convened a task force to examine and revamp the entire program.

The program has twin goals: recruit officers for the CHP and provide a service to the community.

"It's a recruitment tool, yes. But even if the explorers don't choose the CHP, they become adults with a deep appreciation of what law enforcement is all about," said Officer Don Woelke.

Quick Facts about CHP Explorers

35 Explorer posts
500 participants
93 percent of Explorers who attend
CHP Academy graduate

An officer in the Needles Area office, Woelke has been an Explorer advisor for nine years and has seen 40 young people go through the Explorer program from his small community.

"The activities offered by the Explorer program depend on the local Area office," Woelke said. His program in Needles trains youths in disaster preparedness, bicycle safety, theft prevention and traffic control. It sponsored a paint-up, fix-up program for senior citizens.

Explorers in the Monterey and San Francisco Bay areas provide traffic control for large entertainment venues such as Laguna Seca and Sears Point raceways. Traffic originally was handled by local law enforcement, but the well-trained Explorers have freed those agencies for other duties. At the same time, the post earns money for its activities.

Explorer posts have become so active nationwide they hold annual competitions. Woelke's post in Needles sponsors one of the best-known, a four-day April event that attracts 1,200 to 1,600 youths from across the nation who compete for trophies in athletic ability and law enforcement skills.